

A SHORT
A C C O U N T
OF THE
D E A T H
O F

Thomas Hitchens.

By JAMES HITCHENS, *Tinner.*



L O N D O N: Printed by R. HAWES,
And sold at the New Chapel, in the *City Road*; and
at the Rev. Mr. WESLEY's Preaching-Houses,
in Town and Country. 1780.

Wesley Pamphlets
Biographical Pamphlets R7 II

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ACCOUNT

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A SHORT
ACCOUNT, &c.

Bisveal, near Redruth, Cornwall.

1. * * * * * Y Son, *Thomas Hitchens*, was born
* * * * * M * * * * * April 14th, 1723. He went to
* * * * * school till he was about ten years
* * * * * old. From school he went to
work at the Stamps, in dressing
of tin-ore, in which employment he continued
about six years. Afterwards he wrought in
the tin-works under ground, till about a year
before his death. Then he went to dress tin-
leavings for me, having five or six boys under
him. At the same time he plow'd, sow'd,
mow'd, reap'd, and managed all my husban-
dry; understanding every thing both as to the
tin and the land, so that we had scarce one in
the neighbourhood like him.

2. He was from a child of a very sober and
a very sweet behaviour, and remarkably duti-
ful to his parents. But about nineteen he be-
gan to go to revellings and hurlings, and some-
times to be merry with his Companions. Of
this I now and then told him, but not sharp-
ly; for I counted both him and his brother
mighty good young men. And was not a little
proud

proud, when people told me, "I had two like-ly sons, and as stout men as any in the Parish." I thought it best therefore to let him have his liberty; especially as I then saw no great harm in these things,

3. But he had done with these, from the hour he first heard the gospel of the grace of God. He then *chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy all the pleasures of Sin.* He had no fear, in the hottest of the persecution. While the mob were pulling down the house in which we used to meet, he stood at a small distance, all the time, being nothing terrified; and encouraged his brother and said, "God will deliver us: Only let us trust in Him." Nor was he at all moved, when the showers of stones obliged us to stop up all our windows with whole deals. One night we heard a great tumult and noise as of much people and many cries. And it was told us, they were at the House of one of our Brethren, who lived about a quarter of a mile off. *Thomas* did not take time to go the road way, (tho' it was exceeding dark;) but ran directly through the Grounds and over the hedges, till he came to the house. The Mob, hearing the sound of feet, ran away, not one being left behind. So said *Thomas*, the Scripture is fulfilled, *One of you shall chase a thousand.* As he came into the House, the family too were preparing to run out of it. But he soon convinced them, they had no cause to fear, and they mightily rejoiced together, and praised God who had delivered them out of the hands of unreasonable and cruel men. All the windows and doors were dashed in pieces; but
none

none of the family hurt at all, notwithstanding the vast quantities of stones, which had fallen on all sides of them. One very large stone they found in the cradle, close by a little child. But the child was not hurt. So that in all things they saw the hand of God was over them for Good.

4. About eighteen months ago, while his brother *William* and he were working in the pit with another man, the earth calved in upon the man, who cried out for help, and *Thomas* ran toward the place where he was. In running his light went out; but he found the man by his voice, tho' not till he was almost covered in. Before he had cleared him, the earth calved in again, and he was very near covered in himself. And but that it stopt, they knew not how, in one minute more they must both have perished together. *William* hearing the noise, made up to the place, and in some time, relieved them both. Of this *Thomas* often made mention, praising God for his wonderful deliverance.

5. Some Account of the manner wherein he found peace with God, (two or three months after his brother) I lately found in his pocket-book. The substance of it was this:

"In reading the three first chapters of *St. John*, while I was in much trouble and heaviness of Soul, the Lord gave me great comfort: Especially from these words, *To as many as believe in his name to them gave he power to become the sons of God.* But soon after I was stript of all, and thought God had left me, a final Cast-away. Nevertheless I went into my closet, and with a heavy heart said, Lord, I praise thee,

thee, that thou hast not given me over unto death. But how shall I appear before thee? While I spoke, the Lord answered, and applied these words, *I am thy righteousness*; which burst the cords that before kept my Spirit down."

6. He often complained, That when he found great joy, he was in the greatest danger both of pride and lightness: And therefore said, He had much rather, if it were the will of God, be always in a mourning state. He likewise found great temptation to Pride when he was most blest in speaking to the people. And this was the main reason of his not stirring up the gift of God which was in him.

7. He frequently repeated those words of St. Paul, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman*: And those of Job, *I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?* He was very jealous over himself when he was in company with those of a different sex: and if no man besides himself was there, he generally quitted the company as soon as he could.

8. In the latter part of his life he was much grown in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He sometimes saw, as he said, anger or pride in himself; but they had no power: neither had the love or desire of any creature; they were all in subjection under his feet: he was more and more dead to all earthly things, and filled with the fire of God's love. The work of God had a deeper root in his heart, and he was more settled and established in the grace of God.

9. After his brother's death, he declared he could not rest thro' the earnestness of his de-
fire

fire to follow him. However, in the mean time he put in practice what *Samuel* spoke of, namely meeting all the family once a week. He reprov'd me and his mother in several things; but we could not reprove him in any. I could not convince him or *Samuel* of Sin, for two years or more.

10. On *Wednesday, Sep. 10*, In the evening he found himself out of order: He went to bed something earlier than usual, and soon appeared to be in a high fever. But his confidence in God was still the same, and all his words, both that night and the next day, convinced all who came near him, that the peace of God continually ruled in his heart.

11. On *Thursday* evening, between Nine and Ten, his sister sitting by him, he said, "Lord, shall I call, and wilt thou not answer? No; it cannot be. Thou hast promised, every one that asks in faith shall receive." Then he began praying for his Father and Mother; for his Brothers and Sisters, and in particular for her that sat by him. "O my God, marry her to Thyself! Make her all glorious within. Give her an undivided heart." He then prayed for himself. "Now come, O my God, and sanctify me wholly. Press me closer to thyself. Thou knowest, this is all my desire. Give me power to declare thy wondrous works before I go hence. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"

12. As *Mary Biswine* came to the bedside, he looked on her and said, "Now I am free. Now my heart is at liberty. I will praise my God as long as I have breath." After speaking much to the same effect, he lay still a small time;

time, and then broke out into exceeding loud, vehement prayer, his voice being quite altered, and every sentence pronounced with uncommon emphasis. He prayed first for all estates and conditions of men; that the Church of Christ might spread over all nations, that ten thousand times ten thousand might be converted to God, and all the people of the earth praise him. Then he prayed for all the Ministers of the Gospel, from the greatest even to the least; especially for those whom God had lately employed to seek and save those that were lost in *Cornwall*. Afterwards he prayed for *John Trembath*, that he might live to the glory of God, who had brought him back from the gates of death, and might be a means of saving many souls from the bitter pains of eternal death. He then prayed for the Society: "O Lord, unite them as the heart of one man. O Lord give them eyes to see whereinsoever they have departed from Thee. O take from them the spirit of unthankfulness, and suffer them not to bite or devour one another. Heal thou their backslidings, and spread over them the banner of thy love!"

13. With prayer there was continual praise intermixt. Sometimes he was blessing God for what he had done; then praying, "O my God, finish thy work, and take me into thy kingdom. Is this the day, O my God, that I shall kiss my brother in paradise?—O Lord, the angels have already praised thee at my conversion. Is this the day that I shall praise thee with them? Yes, O my God, I am now going to join them, to sing praises to thee for ever."

Then

Then he prayed with great earnestness for *Mary Bifvine* and his own sister, (both of whom he had in the beginning of the evening desired to stay with him till he was in eternity) that they might never grow weary or faint in their minds, that God would send down the Spirit of sanctification into their hearts, and give them resigned wills to bear whatever his Providence should lay upon them: Adding, They shall run and not be weary. I know we shall all meet together, and sing praises unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

He went on, "O how good is God to me, that he hath given me a tongue to praise him; A little while, yet a little while, and I shall praise him in heaven! O the goodness of God, that I a worm of the earth, shall stand there, upon Mount *Sion*, with the hundred forty and four thousand, which *have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb!* Here is a privilege; here is a wonder: that I am made a Son of God! I am a Son of God, and a Joint-Heir with Christ, and I shall soon be where I shall behold him for ever; I, even I, who have been a backslider from God! But he has healed my backslidings and loved me freely."

14. Soon after, he said, "I love thee, O my God, Thou knowest that I love thee, because Thou hast first loved me. O what manner of love is this, that God should stoop to love me! And He is coming to carry me home. O! I see thousands and ten thousands of angels! Do you not see them? O Brother *Trembath*, do you not see what a glorious place

place I am going to ? I am going to join with angels and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven. I am going to reign with God, among ten thousands of his saints, and to bask in the beams of his love for ever."

Then looking on *Mary Bisvine*, he said, "Can't you see Jesus Christ coming, with an innumerable company of angels, and the golden banner displayed ! They are coming to carry me to the bosom of my God. Open their eyes, O God, that they may see them ! O what a good God have I served ! I am sanctified, soul, body, and spirit. I am whiter than snow. I am washed in the blood of my Redeemer. Why, I am all God. My heart is full of God ! O let them who hear me now, praise Thee for ever and ever."

"And yet I have been unfaithful to my God. For he gave me a gift, but I improved it not. I thought I was not worthy to stand in the high-ways and call sinners to repentance. But, O God, Thou hast forgiven me this also, and I will preach Thee now as long as I have breath."

15. He ceased not thus praying and praising for an hour. His parents then coming in, (early on *Friday* morning) he said, "O my mother, you will not weep to see me going to such a loving God. My father and mother will not be backsliders. No ; I know that God loves them, and that we shall all meet together in heaven, to praise him to all eternity." Then looking on his brother, about twelve years old, he said, "Stand off, for fear you catch the distemper. For I fear you are not prepared to die. You have played away the
the

the grace of God. The harvest may come before you are renewed in the image of God, and then how will you appear? Cry mightily to God. Strive with all your might. Call upon him, and God will hear."

He then said, "Right my feet, that I may lie straight, to resign my breath. When I am dead, do you sing me all the way, sing my body to the grave, lay me by my brother, and at the same time my spirit shall be joined to his, and to ten thousand times ten thousand of angels and spirits, singing praises to God and the Lamb for ever."

16. Having spoken till he had no breath left, he paused; and in a short time began again;—"Hear now the words of a dying man—a living wonder—a Christian triumphing over death! O what a God do the Christians serve! What a God I have served! Praise him with me for ever. Behold the immense goodness of our God! O that all the world knew our God! He has now made my heart free, that I may praise him, and I cannot stop while I have breath. Go, tell all the world of this. O brethren! what a good God do we serve! Be not afraid to tell it abroad! Go, shew it to all people, that they may come and serve him too."

When he stopt speaking, the oppression on his breast returned. This he took notice of and said, "While I am praising God, my heart is free; but when I cease, I feel this load again. But I may well bear this; for this is all the hell I shall have." Then he broke out,

"See

“ See a soul escape to bliss,
Keep the Christian Festival !”

“ He hath washed me, and I am whiter than
snow. God is mine, and I am God's. I shall
soon be with him.” Thus he continued, 'till
he could speak no more.

F I N I S.

